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RETAIL PRICES AND WAGE RATES, MARCH QUARTER 1969

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

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Introduction

The Consumer Price Index measures quarterly, for each State Capital, the variations in prices of commodities and services which affect a high proportion of the expenditure of wage earner households. From this quarter, the index has been revised by changing the base year from 1952-53 as 100.0 to 1966-67 as 100.0, and by including new items and weights which more closely reflect the pattern of present-day consumption. Commodities and services included in the index are food, clothing, drapery, home ownership, rent of houses and flats, fuel, light, furniture, household appliances and supplies, fares, motoring, tobacco, cigarettes, beer, cinema, radio and television licences, newspapers, postal and telephone services, hairdressing, dry cleaning, medical and health services, and various other items. In the quarter under review additions are poultry, rent of privately-owned flats, services by doctors, dentists, and hospitals, and health insurance funds. The introduction of new items and weights does not, of itself, raise or lower the level of the index.

For periods prior to the March quarter 1969, index numbers on the new base have been obtained by converting the former series which was based on the year 1952-53. For this purpose, an arithmetical factor has been applied based on the relationship which the old and the new series bore to one another in 1966-67. While this conversion alters the absolute level of the index numbers, the percentage change over any given period is the same in either series.

The various commodities and services have been combined into groups, and group indexes are available for Food, Clothing and Drapery, Housing, Household Supplies and Equipment, and Miscellaneous.

The indexes measure price movements in each city individually. They do not provide a comparison of the retail price level in any city with the retail price level of any other city. The base of the index for each city and for the weighted average, six State Capitals, is year 1966-67 = 100.0. Group indexes also have separate bases for each group.

March Quarter 1969

There was an increase of 0.5 per cent in the Brisbane Consumer Price Index from December quarter 1968 to March quarter 1969, the index number for All Groups rising from 105.3 to 105.8. For the twelve months ended March 1969 the All Groups increase was 2.0 per cent.

From December quarter 1968 to March quarter 1969 the Consumer Price Index increased in all State Capitals. Percentage increases were as follows: Sydney, 0.8; Perth and Hobart, 0.7; Melbourne, 0.6; Brisbane, 0.5; and Adelaide, 0.3.

Since the base year, 1966-67, the rise in the retail price level has been greatest in Sydney and smallest in Adelaide. Percentage increases from 1966-67 to March quarter 1969 were as follows: Sydney, 6.7; Melbourne, 6.6; Hobart, 6.5; Brisbane, 5.8; Perth, 5.6; and Adelaide, 5.5. The rise in the weighted average for the six State Capitals was 6.4 per cent. (It should be

noted that these figures merely indicate rates of price rises in separate cities and do not represent in any way the relativities of actual price levels in the different cities.)

A brief outline of the movements of the various group indexes for Brisbane between December quarter 1968 and March quarter 1969 is shown below.

Food Group

The Food Group index increased from 104.1 to 105.1, a rise during the quarter of 1.0 per cent. While price increases were recorded for fresh meat (except pork), bread, and eggs, these were offset by a decrease in potato prices.

Clothing and Drapery Group

Increases in the prices of men's clothing, together with increases in the prices of piecegoods and footwear, were mainly responsible for a rise of 0.3 per cent in the Clothing and Drapery Group. The index increased from 104.1 to 104.4.

Housing Group

The Housing Group index increased by 0.7 per cent, from 109.2 to 110.0, due chiefly to increases in private rents.

Household Supplies and Equipment Group

This group index rose from 104.2 to 104.7, an increase of 0.5 per cent.

Miscellaneous Group

The Miscellaneous Group index rose from 106.1 to 106.3, an increase of 0.2 per cent.

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE WAGE RATES

Commonwealth and State wage rates are reviewed by the appropriate industrial authorities from time to time and details of basic wage rates (which used to be determined in part by price movements) were shown in issues of this Bulletin up to March quarter 1967.

Commonwealth Rates

In a decision of 8 July 1966 the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission announced that it intended to grant relief to low wage earners by inserting a provision in awards prescribing a minimum wage for adult males. The weekly minimum wage rate prescribed was the current basic wage rate, which for Brisbane was $31, plus $3.75 per week.

Subsequently, the minimum wage has been twice increased when all award rates were raised as described below. The wage applicable to each State following these increases is set out in the table.

Minimum Wages, Adult Males: Weekly Rates, Commonwealth Awards

Date Operative[a]	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Perth	Hobart
	$	$	$	$	$	$
11 July 1966 ..	37.25	36.45	34.75	36.05	36.55	37.15
1 July 1967 ..	38.25	37.45	35.75	37.05	37.55	38.15
25 October 1968	39.60	38.80	37.10	38.40	38.90	39.50

a Rates became operative from the beginning of the first pay-period commencing on or after the date shown.

The Commission in June 1967 decided to eliminate basic wages and margins from its awards and to introduce the concept of a "total wage" to operate from the beginning of the first pay-period commencing on or after 1 July 1967. The last basic wage declaration was that operative from 11 July 1966 when the male rate in Brisbane became $31 per week.

Since this decision all wage rates (i.e. total wages) for adult males and adult females in awards of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission have been increased at intervals by the same amount. These increases, incorporated in the table above, were $1 from 1 July 1967 and $1.35 from 25 October 1968, payable from the beginning of the first pay-period after those dates.

State Rates

The concept of a basic wage has been retained by the Queensland Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. The variations since its inception are published in the Queensland Year Book. Recent variations are set out below.

Queensland Basic Wage, South-Eastern Division

Date Operative	Adult Males	Adult Females
	$	$
6 May 1963	28.60	21.45
13 July 1964	30.00	22.50
7 December 1964	30.60	22.95
29 March 1965	30.90	23.20
20 September 1965	31.40	23.55
23 May 1966	32.70	24.55
10 April 1967	33.20	24.90
3 July 1967[a]	34.20	25.90
28 October 1968	35.55	27.25

a A general award increase of $1 per week was retrospectively declared to have been part of the basic wage.

Current basic and living wage rates ruling in capital cities of all States are set out in the table below.

State Basic Wages: Weekly Rates

State	Date Operative	Adult Males	Adult Females
		$	$
New South Wales	25 October 1968	35.85	27.45
Victoria	1 July 1967	a	a
Queensland	28 October 1968	35.55	27.25
South Australia	28 October 1968	34.65	26.55
Western Australia	19 November 1968	35.45	27.08
Tasmania	25 October 1968	35.75	27.40

a In Victoria, basic wages and margins were deleted from wages board determinations and wage rates expressed as "total wages" from 1 July 1967. The State basic wage was $32.70 at that date. Since then "total wages" have increased in conformity with increases in "total wages" paid under Commonwealth awards as shown above.

State awards in three States include provisions which prescribe minimum rates for adult males similar to the Commonwealth award provisions mentioned above. Current minimum rates operative in the three States are as set out below.

Minimum Wages, Adult Males: Weekly Rates, State Awards

State	Date Operative	Amount
		$
South Australia	28 October 1968	38.40
Western Australia	25 October 1968	38.90
Tasmania	25 October 1968	40.45

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9 June 1969

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Table 1 - Consumer Price Index: Total and Group Indexes, Brisbane
(Year 1966-67 = 100.0)

Period	Food	Clothing and Drapery	Housing	Household Supplies and Equipment	Miscell-aneous	All Groups
Year						
1958-59 ..	78.0	88.4	78.9	93.6	79.3	82.1
1959-60 ..	80.9	90.5	81.4	94.9	80.6	84.2
1960-61 ..	85.0	93.0	84.5	95.5	83.1	87.1
1961-62 ..	85.2	94.3	86.3	97.0	85.6	88.4
1962-63 ..	84.6	94.6	88.5	96.8	86.3	88.7
1963-64 ..	86.7	95.2	89.2	95.9	86.8	89.6
1964-65 ..	92.2	96.6	91.5	96.7	90.4	93.0
1965-66 ..	98.3	97.8	97.2	98.7	95.4	97.5
1966-67 ..	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1967-68 ..	103.6	102.4	105.8	101.2	103.2	103.3
Quarter						
1968: March ..	104.6	102.6	105.9	101.1	103.4	103.7
June ..	103.7	103.1	106.5	101.7	103.7	103.7
September	103.9	103.6	108.6	103.5	105.0	104.7
December	104.1	104.1	109.2	104.2	106.1	105.3
1969: March ..	105.1	104.4	110.0	104.7	106.3	105.8
Percentage Increase or Decrease (-) on Previous Quarter						
Quarter						
1968: March ..	1.9	0.2	0.3	0.1	-	0.7
June ..	-0.9	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.3	-
September	0.2	0.5	2.0	1.8	1.3	1.0
December	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.6
1969: March ..	1.0	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.5

Table 2 - Consumer Price Index: State Capital Cities
(Year 1966-67 = 100.0 for Each City and for Six State Capitals)

As the base for each city is 100.0, the indexes in the table below do not indicate relative price levels as between cities, but they may be used to compare relative price movements in the various cities.

Period	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Perth	Hobart	Weighted Average Six State Capitals
Year							
1958-59 ..	84.6	82.9	82.1	83.6	83.2	84.1	83.6
1959-60 ..	86.5	85.3	84.2	86.2	84.8	85.6	85.7
1960-61 ..	89.6	89.5	87.1	89.8	87.9	90.3	89.2
1961-62 ..	89.9	89.8	88.4	89.5	88.2	90.7	89.6
1962-63 ..	90.4	89.7	88.7	89.1	88.7	90.7	89.8
1963-64 ..	91.4	90.4	89.6	90.2	89.8	91.7	90.6
1964-65 ..	94.5	94.0	93.0	93.9	92.6	94.6	94.0
1965-66 ..	97.7	97.5	97.5	97.0	96.1	98.0	97.4
1966-67 ..	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1967-68 ..	103.2	103.7	103.3	102.9	102.9	104.6	103.3
Quarter							
1968: March ..	103.2	103.8	103.7	102.6	103.1	104.6	103.4
June ..	104.0	104.8	103.7	104.2	104.0	104.6	104.2
September	104.4	105.1	104.7	104.2	104.3	105.0	104.6
December	105.9	106.0	105.3	105.2	104.9	105.8	105.7
1969: March ..	106.7	106.6	105.8	105.5	105.6	106.5	106.4

Table 3 - Average Retail Prices: Food, Brisbane

Item	Unit	Year	Month		
		1968	Jan. 1969	Feb. 1969	March 1969
		Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents
Cereal Products					
Bread, white (unwrapped and delivered)	2 lb loaf	18.1	19.0	19.0	19.0
Flour, plain	2 lb pkt	14.3	15.1	15.3	15.6
Flour, self-raising	2 lb pkt	17.1	17.9	18.5	18.6
Biscuits, wheatmeal	½ lb pkt	16.8	17.0	18.0	18.0
Biscuits, milk arrowroot ..	½ lb pkt	17.6	18.4	18.8	18.8
Biscuits, dry	½ lb pkt	17.7	18.6	19.4	19.4
Oats, rolled	2 lb pkt	41.4	43.0	43.3	42.1
Rice	1 lb pkt	14.0	14.5	14.6	14.6
Dairy Produce					
Milk, fresh (bottled, delivered) ..	1 quart	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0
Milk, powdered	12 oz tin	39.2	39.2	40.1	38.5
Milk, condensed	14 oz tin	22.3	22.9	22.6	21.9
Cheese, cheddar, matured ..	8 oz pkt	32.7	32.8	32.7	32.6
Cheese, cheddar, processed ..	8 oz pkt	24.3	24.5	25.5	24.7
Butter	1 lb	50.6	50.7	50.8	50.4
Eggs (24 oz in carton)	dozen	58.4	64.7	64.1	67.3

Table 3 - Average Retail Prices: Food, Brisbane (continued)

Item	Unit	Year	Month		
		1968	Jan. 1969	Feb. 1969	March 1969
		Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents
Fruit and Vegetables					
Peaches, canned	29 oz tin	31.1	32.5	32.2	31.3
Pears, canned	29 oz tin	31.4	32.5	32.2	32.0
Sultanas	1 lb pkt	36.0	36.6	36.6	36.4
Peas, green, canned ..	15½ oz tin	20.7	21.0	20.9	19.9
Peas, frozen	10 oz pkt	26.6	26.4	26.4	25.3
Potatoes	7 lb	51.7	55.9	47.8	36.6
Onions	1 lb	11.1	6.2	6.9	8.1
Beverages					
Tea	½ lb pkt	30.8	30.8	30.3	30.6
Coffee, instant	2 oz jar	43.6	43.6	42.7	45.5
Cocoa	8 oz pkt	32.0	32.8	32.8	32.9
Other Food (excluding meat)					
Sugar	4 lb pkt	42.7	42.8	41.8	43.0
Jam, plum	1½ lb tin	24.5	25.6	25.2	26.1
Jam, marmalade	1½ lb tin	27.4	27.9	27.9	28.3
Honey, liquid	16 oz jar	26.7	26.1	26.9	26.7
Peanut Paste	12 oz jar	40.3	40.3	39.9	41.0
Beans, baked, canned ..	16 oz tin	16.0	16.0	16.1	16.4
Spaghetti, canned ..	16 oz tin	15.9	16.0	16.1	16.4
Margarine, table ..	1 lb	38.8	39.4	39.4	39.4
Sauce, tomato	10 oz bottle	22.4	22.6	22.7	22.6
Pickles, mustard ..	10 oz jar	24.3	24.3	24.9	24.4
Sardines, Norwegian ..	3¾ oz tin	16.3	16.6	16.6	16.9
Salmon, Australian, canned ..	16 oz tin	42.8	42.5	42.5	42.4
Soup, tomato	16 oz tin	18.4	18.3	18.3	18.3
			Quarter Ended March 1969		
Meat					
Beef, sirloin, roast ..	1 lb	59.6	61.2		
" , rib, roast (without bone)	1 lb	51.6	53.0		
" , steak, rump ..	1 lb	78.3	80.7		
" , steak, chuck ..	1 lb	48.4	49.6		
" , steak, blade ..	1 lb	58.1	60.2		
" , sausages	1 lb	26.6	26.7		
" , silverside, corned ..	1 lb	55.3	56.7		
" , brisket, corned ..	1 lb	41.2	41.8		
Mutton, leg	1 lb	34.2	34.3		
" , shoulder ..	1 lb	20.9	20.5		
" , chops, loin ..	1 lb	33.1	32.0		
" , chops, leg ..	1 lb	34.2	33.7		
Lamb, leg	1 lb	49.3	48.9		
" , shoulder	1 lb	30.4	29.0		
" , chops, loin ..	1 lb	52.7	51.5		
" , chops, leg ..	1 lb	52.6	51.7		
Pork, leg	1 lb	61.7	60.2		
" , loin	1 lb	60.7	57.8		
" , chops	1 lb	61.0	57.9		
Bacon, rashers, pre-packed ..	½ lb	51.1	49.3		